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Central Intelligence Bulletin

DEPT OF STATE review(s) completed.

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159

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Approved For Release 2003/04/18 : CIA-RDP79T00975A009700120001-1

Approved For Release 2003/04/18 : CIA-RDP79T00975A009700120001-1

[Redacted]
2 March 1967

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Approved For Release 2003/04/18 : CIA-RDP79T00975A009700120001-1

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Approved For Release 2003/04/18 : CIA-RDP79T00975A009700120001-1

France - Congo (Kinshasa): Mobutu's search for financial aid is providing France an opportunity to increase its influence in the Congo.

According to Foreign Minister Bomboko, Paris has agreed to provide a short-term credit of \$20 million to cover part of the foreign exchange shortages that resulted from the dispute with Union Miniere. He said that the French have also agreed to send additional technicians to the Congo and to establish a school of mines at the university in Lubumbashi.

[Bomboko told Ambassador Blake that he did not react to a French hint that the Congo realign its foreign policy toward the former French West African states and away from the English speaking states in east and central Africa.]

President Mobutu's sensitivity to "neocolonialist domination" has made him wary of the French. His increased hostility to Belgium, however, may lead him to seek French assistance.

Paris' long-standing policy has been to supplement but not replace Belgian influence in the Congo. Several key figures in the small mercenary force, however, have been reported under Paris' control and the French have placed a few competent Frenchmen in key positions in the Congolese administration.

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Approved For Release 2003/04/18 : CIA-RDP79T00975A009700120001-1

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Approved For Release 2003/04/18 : CIA-RDP79T00975A009700120001-1

NOTES

Indonesia: Hard liners in the anti-Sukarno camp probably will use testimony at the current trial of Brigadier General Supardjo to increase pressure for Sukarno's dismissal as president during the special session of Congress that begins on 7 March. Supardjo, the highest-ranking army figure involved in the coup attempt of October 1965, was not captured until this past January. He has revealed that Sukarno facilitated his long concealment.

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Syria: The Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) and Syrian negotiators have concluded an agreement for reopening the pipeline from northern Iraq, which was closed on 12 December 1966. Although the agreement is subject to final Syrian Government ratification, the line may be reopened today or tomorrow. IPC has knuckled under to Syrian demands for increased transit revenues and loading fees. IPC, however, won its demand for no time limit on negotiations for back payment of fees for the period 1955-66. Damascus will flaunt this as another success in their fight against the "imperialists."

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Colombia: An estimated 100 armed men on 27 February attacked a weakly defended police outpost in Santander Department, north of Bogota, and inflicted several casualties. The attackers are probably members of the pro-Castro Army of National Liberation (ELN). If the ELN is responsible, this is its largest operation since 1965. In any case, it is the most significant initiative by any Colombian guerrilla unit in several months. President Lleras has reportedly ordered strong punitive measures.

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